

PAUL CHAPPELL MISSES THE FUNDAMENTAL POINT IN THE MUSIC ISSUE

Updated July 13, 2013 (first published July 9, 2013) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

Paul Chappell's new book *The Road Ahead: Ten Steps to Authentic Ministry for Independent Baptists* suggests a path for independent Baptist churches to follow for the coming days.

That Chappell, pastor of Lancaster Baptist Church of Lancaster, California, represents the thinking of a large number of independent Baptists is evident by the recommendations of prominent preachers who have signed on to his statement at the following page on Chappell's blog: ministry127.com/theroadahead.

The Road Ahead contains many good thoughts. I was personally challenged and edified by various statements.

I wish that I could stop right here and join the crowd that is running over to Ministry127.com to sign the form, and that the rest of this review could consist of the statements from the book with which I strongly agree.

But my conscience won't allow me to do that. I'm convinced that the book, taken as a whole, sounds the death knell on churches who follow the path laid out therein and particularly those churches that follow Chappell's example in and philosophy of music.

Many are impressed with all of the good things that exist at Lancaster Baptist Church. They believe that any problems are relatively minor matters, but if a problem happens to be structural and foundational, that is no minor matter.

Today Lancaster Baptist Church is indeed a great house that is graced with many biblical features, but no house will stand if the foundation is weak AT ANY POINT. And if those living in a great house ignore a foundational issue, and instead of fixing the foundation they blacklist the "foundation critics" and mock them, they are guaranteeing the collapse of the house.

I am convinced that this is exactly what Pastor Chappell is doing and I single him out only because of his national and international influence and because he obviously wants to help set the agenda for other churches by writing such a book.

This is not a "local church issue" and it is not a private matter.

Pastor Chappell mentions music, but only to trivialize what is at stake while ignoring the major issues.

On the one hand he says that “spiritual music is essential to spiritual growth,” which is a great statement as far as it goes, but when it comes to defining and identifying spiritual music, he reverts to shallow cliches and to the following type of statements that treat the music issue largely as a personal issue:

“If my brother has a slight variance in his music standard ... it doesn’t matter! I don’t have to embrace his personal convictions--to the right or left--as my own. But neither do I need to castigate him to keep my standing before God” (Paul Chappell, *The Road Ahead*, Kindle location 1879).

“Not long ago, I preached at two conferences, conducted just a few weeks apart, in different parts of the country. ... The music at these two meetings differed from each other, and they were both different than the music style at Lancaster Baptist Church. In one church the music was extremely conservative. A few of the songs were much more formal than I am accustomed to. Their large string orchestra played with the congregational hymns. ... A few weeks later, I preached at a conference in which the music was--within the realms of conservative music--the polar opposite of the first conference. They had three acoustic guitars on the platform and down home style gospel music. The congregation was more vocally responsive to the special music. ... Was one style of music right and the other wrong? I’ll leave that as a matter between those two pastors and the Holy Spirit. For my part, I was blessed and enriched by the worship and fellowship in both meetings. I don’t believe the music at either place--all of which was rendered with hearts dedicated to God--was black and white. I think it was all vibrant shades of color expressing Christians’ pure hearts of worship to the Lord.

“More concerning to me than variance in styles of godly music is when good, fundamental, revival-longing people have a spirit of condemnation for one another” (Paul Chappell, *The Road Ahead*, Kindle location 2164-2183).

In these excerpts from *The Road Ahead*, Pastor Chappell says he is concerned about spiritual music and says that there is such a thing as “ungodly” music, but in practice the thing that he emphasizes the most is that there is a wide variety of acceptable music styles and that the most important thing is the heart and sincerity of the worshippers. Further, he says that in his thinking the greatest error is to condemn others for their music styles.

Consider the consequence of Chappell’s position on music.

His principle gives a green light for independent Baptist churches to continue to push the music boundaries and to pursue innovations of doubtful nature and to mess around with contemporary music -- all in the name of “it’s just different styles and tastes.”

Chappell’s principle will tend to shut the mouths of any godly people who fear that their church’s music is moving in a dangerous direction.

Chappell's principle gives a green light for pastors to treat any "critics" of their music program as enemies of the work of God, no matter how faithful these people have been and no matter how gracious their "criticism," as many pastors are already doing.

Chappell's principle will also encourage pastors and church members to misunderstand the music issue by ignoring the most fundamental issue of all when it comes to church music today, since he ignores this issue himself.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE WITH CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP MUSIC

The fundamental issue is not that there aren't a wide variety of acceptable music styles and that there isn't a wide element of "personal taste" in sacred music. I certainly don't deny that. I enjoy a wide range of sacred music from Hale & Wilder to the Marshall Family, from the staid old Protestant hymns that one can hear at Metropolitan Tabernacle in London to indigenous Nepali hymns that sound nothing like any Western hymn.

The fundamental issue is not whether a church uses guitars or a tambourine or a banjo, or whether people clap their hands, or whether they are quiet or boisterous.

The fundamental issue is not how the singers hold a microphone. Performance issues and singing styles are important, but they are not the fundamental issue.

The fundamental issue is not whether the music was written by Baptists.

The fundamental issue is not even how much or what type of syncopation is acceptable within the bounds of sacred music or what type of chord sequences produce what kind of response in the worshipers. Syncopation and chording and other aspects of music structure are important issues and should be addressed by God's people, but this is not the fundamental issue.

The fundamental issue is that contemporary worship music represents the end-time, one-world "church" with all of its apostasies and heresies and spiritual dangers, and those who mess around with this particular music are building bridges to a most dangerous world. These are bridges that will be crossed by individuals, families, and churches.

The fundamental issue is that the use of contemporary music is a slippery slope away from strong biblical convictions.

This cannot be refuted. We have documented this with nearly 500 pages of information in the book *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians*, and in the video presentations *The Transformative Power of Contemporary Praise Music* and *The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music*, all which we have made available for free at the Way of Life web site. This

information has been gathered over a period of 40 years since I was first confronted with CCM as a young Christian in my mid-20s and began a lifetime of prayerful study of the issue.

Many men have issued this warning.

Ernest Pickering: “Perhaps nothing precipitates a slide toward New Evangelicalism more than the introduction of Contemporary Christian Music. This inevitably leads toward a gradual slide in other areas as well until the entire church is infiltrated by ideas and programs alien to the original position of the church” (*The Tragedy of Compromise: The Origin and Impact of the New Evangelicalism*, Bob Jones University Press, 1994).

Gordon Sears: “When the standard of music is lowered, then the standard of dress is also lowered. When the standard of dress is lowered, then the standard of conduct is also lowered. When the standard of conduct is lowered, then the sense of value in God’s truth is lowered” (*Songfest Newsletter*, April 2001).

Victor Sears: “Good fundamental Baptists and others that refuse the teachings of the charismatic crowd concerning tongues, signs, miracles, and so forth are now singing their music in our churches and preparing our people for the world, the flesh and the Devil. It is the new Trojan Horse move ... to deaden our churches to spiritual truth” (*Baptist Bible Tribune*, 1981).

Frank Garlock: “If a church starts using CCM it will eventually lose all other standards” (Bob Jones University chapel, March 12, 2001).

When it comes to bridges built from Bible-believing churches to CCM, the influence is in one direction only. Bible-believing churches that borrow from contemporary praise music don’t influence the world of CCM. That crowd has no sympathy with what we stand for. They are bored with our music and have no interest in our position. They think our standards are silly and outdated at best. They despise separation. They even consider it a Pharisaical heresy.

But Bible-believers are most definitely influenced by the CCM crowd when they build bridges in that direction. We can see this on every hand over the past 20 or so years. The acceptance of contemporary music has been at the heart and soul of every example in which a formerly Bible-believing separatist type church has changed its stance. There might be an exception, but I don’t know of any. We have documented many examples in *The Collapse of Separatism among Fundamental Baptists*, available as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.

The reason for this is that contemporary worship music is not just music. Even when its lyrics are biblical and its rock rhythm is toned down, it represents a philosophy of Christianity that is opposed to what biblicist churches stand for, opposed to a staunch, unwavering doctrinal stance, opposed to strict separation from the world, opposed to ecclesiastical separation.

I have never heard of an independent Baptist church becoming Lutheran through singing Luther's "A Mighty Fortress" or Methodist by singing John Wesley's hymns, but I know of MANY that have gone down the path of the contemporary philosophy through listening to contemporary worship music.

The writers of the old Protestant hymns did not represent a movement that was brashly opposed to old-fashioned Biblicist, separatist Christianity, whereas the contemporary worship crowd most definitely does. The old Protestants did not represent the end-time, one-world "church" in fellowship with Rome, but contemporary worship music most definitely does.

Dan Lucarini, author of *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement: Confessions of a Former Worship Leader*, says:

"NO ONE SHOULD DENY THE POWER OF MUSIC TO PROSELYTIZE! Pastors in particular must defend their flocks from false teaching, heresies and 'ear ticklers' who bring worldly sensuality into the congregation; you are right to point out how easily this comes into a church through worship music. IT SEEMS WISER TO DECLINE THE USE OF WHAT SEEMS TO BE A PERFECTLY GOOD SONG, RATHER THAN TO GIVE ANY HONOR AND HINT OF ENDORSEMENT TO THE COMPOSER AND HIS/HER MISSION" (Dan Lucarini, e-mail, May 24, 2009).

CONTEMPORARY PRAISE MUSIC AND THE AGE OF THE INTERNET

We are living in the age of end-time technology, which means that one can no longer use songs and hymns without the listeners being able to come into communication with the authors with great simplicity. Whereas even 30 years ago, it was not possible to easily contact and be influenced by authors of Christian music, that has changed dramatically with the Internet.

Now if people in a Bible-believing church hear songs by Jack Hayford or MercyMe or Graham Kendrick or Stuart Townend or Darlene Zschech or Keith Getty, songs heard in "adapted form" in many Bible-believing churches today, they can easily search for that group or individual on the web and come into intimate contact with them -- not only with their music (played in "real" rock & roll style as opposed to the watered-down versions performed in churches that are only beginning to dabble with contemporary praise music), but also with their ecumenical/charismatic/one-world church philosophy.

LANCASTER'S BRIDGE TO CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

All of this is why it matters that under Paul Chappell's watch Lancaster Baptist Church and West Coast Baptist College have developed the principle of using contemporary worship music, and this is why it matters that they continue to justify this type of thing. And this is why it matters that Paul Chappell ignores this issue in his latest book.

The following are just a few examples of contemporary music that Lancaster/West Coast have used:

“Hallelujah to the Lamb” by Don Moen (who thinks God is the author of the weird charismatic “laughing revival”)

“In Christ Alone” by Getty/Townend

“Word of God Speak” by MercyMe (a charismatic mystical song)

“Stronger” and “Shout to the Lord” by Zschech/Hillsong (performed by Lancaster’s high school mixed ensemble; Hillsong performed for Catholic Youth Day and Pope Benedict)

“Majesty, Worship His Majesty” by Jack Hayford (a Pentecostal Kingdom Now anthem; Hayford says God told him not to preach against the Roman Catholic church)

“Great Is the Lord” and “How Majestic Is Your Name” by Michael W. Smith (who has been “slain in the Spirit” and “laughed uncontrollably, “rolling on the floor ... hyperventilating”)

“Faithful Men” by Twila Paris (who works with the Roman Catholic Kathy Troccoli and with ecumenist Robert Webber, who promotes unity between evangelicals and Catholics)

“In Christ Alone” by Michael English (who spent the 1990s and early 2000s committing adultery with another man’s wife, bar hopping, dating a stripper, and undergoing “rehab” for drug addiction)

Songs by Steven Curtis Chapman (the most honored “high energy Christian rocker” of the 1990s who says he doesn’t preach “fire and brimstone” and describes God as “Lord of the Dance”)

Songs by Geron Davis (“Jesus Only” Pentecostal who denies the Trinity)

“I Will Rise” by Chris Tomlin (a member of an emerging church that seeks to build the kingdom in this present world)

Songs by Graham Kendrick (charismatic founder of the radically ecumenical Jesus March that includes Catholics and Mormons)

“Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)” by Chris Tomlin was performed at Lancaster Sunday morning, Oct. 9, 2011

“Not Guilty” by the jazz CCM artist Mandisa was performed at the 2011 Leadership Conference

“Above All Things” by Rebecca St. James (covered on West Coast Baptist College’s “For the Faith of the Gospel” CD)

“Glorify You Alone” by Gateway Worship

“Step by Step” by Rich Mullins (Lancaster Youth Conference 2012, Mullins was in the process of converting to Rome when he died)

In *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians* we have provided extensive documentation that these individuals and groups are one-world church builders.

The fundamental issue in regard to music is that unwise bridges are being built by men who should know better.

On the other hand, I thank the Lord for the many pastors who are resisting the tide and not following the crowd. The following is one of the many testimonies I have received from pastors who have written to me over the past couple of years:

“I especially appreciate your focus on the beginnings of CCM and the result of what it has become. You are right in saying that CCM is of the same spirit that has led to end time apostasy. No walls of separation, unity and oneness is its cry. I've noticed even in our church that when a young person starts listening to CCM, separation and standards sound silly to them. They begin to mold to the whole CCM mentality and I have found them to be bored with Bible preaching. Thankfully, there are young people here who desire to do right and know the dangers of CCM mainly because of your work on this. Thank you. It has been a great encouragement and help to me as a Pastor.”

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